



Research and Reference Service

OVERSEAS REACTION TO THE CUBAN SITUATION
(As of 8 a.m., December 5, 1962)

R-172-62 (A)

December 5, 1962

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SUMMARY

As a crisis, the Cuba situation has faded from the world news scene, although there are some editorial post-mortems.

Even the Soviets are letting Cuba cool off with practically no attention given to unsettled issues. Crucial dangers in the Caribbean were eliminated by Soviet "reason and firmness" and strict adherence to true Marxism-Leninism, says Moscow. This helps clear the way for solutions of other pressing problems.

Red China still is praising Castro for his particular, authentic Marxist-Leninist stand which prevented invasion and frustrated U.S. hopes of "strangling" the Cuban revolution.

Latin American observers consider the military phase finished, but concentrate on the unresolved problem of Castro-Communism in the hemisphere.

Some African editors warn that serious troubles remain. Since they blamed both Washington and Moscow for creating a crisis, they now credit both with relaxing tensions.

Two newspapers in India observe that the whole thing proves Russia does not want war.

Several influential papers in Western Europe attempt to draw a balance. Most see gains for peace in the reopening of talks between the two major world powers and the heightened U.S. prestige. An Italian paper states the most fundamental change is "that America has become conscious of its power and Russia has become conscious of the limits of its own."

SOVIET UNION -

The last echoes of the Cuban crisis have been used by the Soviet Union as a departure for calls on the West to go on now to the solution of other problems. Propaganda about Cuba has not been overly extensive.

There has been practically no media attention to the remaining unsettled issues, nor was there any meaningful public appraisal of conclusions drawn from Mikoyan's talks here in America. Propagandists saw usefulness in the Washington talks, professed to be satisfied with the way things are going, and left the general impression that the crucial crisis aspects have been eliminated. In Frol Kozlov's words, the Cuban crisis has been "largely overcome."

On one hand, Soviet propaganda sees Cuba no longer as a threat to East-West relations, thanks to Soviet reason and firmness. On the other hand, there reappear charges and warnings from Moscow that American "hardcorers," reflecting Pentagon and allied interests, are not satisfied with the potential shift of American policy toward a "peaceful coexistence" line conducive to the settlement of other important international problems.

Soviet Views on Current Situation

What emerged from Mikoyan's U.S. visit were generalizations about Soviet-American clarification of each other's position on "Cuba, Berlin and many other questions. According to Moscow the possibility exists now for progress on bringing together different points of view on a number of international problems.

In reporting on U Thant's John Hopkins University speech, Moscow singled out his contention that Khrushchev, irrespective of the appeal of his philosophy on arms, apparently does not want war. The West, according to the U.N. Secretary General, does not seem to appreciate this "obvious change of political climate in the Soviet Union."

Soviet reportage also stressed that Thant paid special attention to the Caribbean crisis and its settlement on the basis of a Soviet-American compromise.

Things Still to be Done

Again turning to the U Thant speech, Moscow used it to convey the impression that there have now been U.S.-USSR agreements on "certain fundamentals" of the Cuban crisis. To those who would like a "more complete and comprehensive solution" U Thant said, according to Soviet media, that this being an imperfect world, we must often accept less than perfect solutions.

There is hardly any mention in Soviet output of the IL-28s, except a recent Moscow reference to official U.S. cognizance that the bombers are beginning to move out of Cuba.

The inspection problem was touched on most authoritatively in connection with Mikoyan's U.S. visit. He called Cuba's demand for reciprocal inspection of U.S. territory a "fair proposal" supported by the USSR. Since then it has apparently not been discussed.

U.S. Commitments

A broadcast to South America on November 29 carried a rare and general Moscow reference to American obligations in the settlement of the Cuban crisis. After asserting that the USSR has fulfilled its commitments, the broadcast charged that "the U.S. falls very short of having done all incumbent upon it to completely normalize the situation, to establish a firm peace in the Caribbean and in the whole world."

In a slightly less general vein, a later authoritative Izvestiya article referred to demands now being heard in the U.S. "to denounce the agreement reached between the Soviet Union and the U.S., and to 'take back' Washington's commitment not to invade Cuba." However, calls for a U.S. no-invasion pledge receded markedly during Mikoyan's Washington visit.

Soviet Union and Cuba

Since Mikoyan's Havana generalizations about Soviet friendship and support for Cuba, Moscow has not committed itself any more firmly. First Deputy Premier Kozlov, speaking at the Italian Communist Party Congress, said only that the USSR will continue helping "revolutionary" Cuba defend its independence.

617
The Izvestiya article already mentioned warned that those in the U.S. who would want to renege on promises made have to be reminded that the "Soviet Union did not intend to reach agreement with the U.S. in order to let anyone threaten the security of Cuba, but to see that its security was guaranteed."

Mikoyan's son wrote in the weekly Za Rubezhom that Soviet vessels are on the way to the "free territory of America" with food, machinery, manufactured articles and raw materials needed by Cuba. He stressed that the Soviet Union's road lay in the direction of "export of goods, and not the 'export of revolution'."

CHINA

The November 25 joint statement of the Castro government and the National Directorate of Cuban front groups has, expectedly, received strong support in comment from Peking. A People's Daily editorial of November 29 in response to this latest pronouncement from Havana commends Castro for defying U.S. demands for inspection. Castro's firm "Marxist-Leninist" stand, the editorial instructs, has been foremost in preventing an invasion of the island and frustrating U.S. hopes for "strangling" the Cuban revolution. Cuba's determination to "fight the U.S. aggressors to the end" was stressed by Cuban Deputy Premier Che Guevara in an interview with a Daily Worker correspondent carried today by People's Daily. The U.S. role as "world gendarme," as allegedly "laid bare" by U.S. action in the Cuban crisis, was cited yesterday by CPR representative Chao I-Min at the Tenth Congress of the Italian Communist Party; Peking NCNA supplied the text of his speech to subscribers in Asia and Europe.

Peking has also used the Cuba crisis to step up its running attack on Yugoslav revisionism. Recent publication of a pamphlet in Belgrade taking Castro to task for shortsighted adventurism evoked a vociferous chastisement by Peking of the Tito government for its "malicious attack" upon the Cuban revolution. The rebuttal was voiced in a lengthy People's Daily "observer" article of December 2 containing some of the strongest wording thus far observed in the Sino-Yugoslav polemic. The Yugoslav pamphlet -- entitled "The Rebellion of Cuba" -- is described by Peking as heaping abuse "upon the system of proletarian dictatorship, of socialist democracy, which has been firmly established in Cuba."

Peking appears to have been unmoved by a recent official protest from Belgrade complaining of Chinese Communist press slander.

Mikoyan's Washington visit and talks with President Kennedy and Secretary Rusk were reported by NCNA without comment.

LATIN AMERICA

Coverage of the Cuba crisis has declined substantially with editorial comment meager. What there is concentrates heavily on two notes: the unresolved problem of still extant Castro-Communism and an attempt to evaluate short and long-range implications of the crisis.

Danger of Castro-Communist Subversion Not Over

There is a general feeling in Latin America that only the military phase of the crisis is past -- that the threat of Castro-Communist subversion remains. La Capital of Rosario, Argentina, sees "Peace...reestablished in the Caribbean, but the problem of a Marxist-Leninist Government continues." Ultima Hora of Lima, Peru, while conceding that the offensive weapons were being removed, expressed its concern that "the danger of this center of Red infection remains in all its gravity."

Mexico City's Excelsior put the case more strongly, fearing that "the first firm decision in many years by the government of Washington may be in danger of becoming a Pyrrhic victory" unless the OAS continues to defend against Castro-Communist intervention in other nations.

The paper expressed concern over the Soviet presence in the Western Hemisphere, commenting in particular on the undesirable operation of Soviet fishing vessels in international waters facing the Gulf of Mexico. The Mexico City daily, Ovaciones, said yesterday, "The principal of non-intervention, which we have defended is no longer valid in the case of Cuba."

Brazil strikes its usual discordant note on this theme. According to O Jornal of Rio de Janeiro, Luiz Carlos Prestes, Communist Party head, is convinced that "There is no need for a new putsch; there is no need for bloody methods." Prime Minister Hermes Lima is quoted as saying "The danger of the propagation of Communism, represented

56
by Cuba, does not extend to South America, /but/ is limited to the Antilles and Central America." O Jornal concludes that the government is already so infiltrated by Communists that "orders from Moscow can be carried out without putschs and without violence."

Referring to the most recent sessions of the Council of the OAS, El Diario Ilustrado, Santiago, Chile, wonders whether Chile, too, is not following along the same course as Brazil and Mexico, "again adopting third positions" by their objections to "investigations of subversive activities on /Latin/ American soil" in the name of the principles of national sovereignty and non-intervention.

Drawing up a Balance Sheet

In summing up the results of the Cuban crisis, El Mercurio of Santiago, Chile finds that it has resulted in the "political de-capitalization of Communism." It contends that Fidel Castro's loss of prestige would be prejudicial, in the short term, for the Latin American Communist parties -- that the lack of preoccupation of the Soviet Union in its principal satellite and protege in America was not lost upon the rank-and-file follower. In a later editorial, the same paper credits this realization with altering the political line of FRAP (Leftist Popular Action Front) to a "much more nationalist, independent line," soft-peddalling international issues, and emphasizing domestic affairs. Equally clear to El Mercurio were the facts that 1) "Despite their boasts of spacial exploration, the totalitarians /Communist/ do not feel sufficiently strong to face the coalition of democratic powers" and 2) "The doubts that existed in many sectors regarding the unity of the Western Hemisphere, in the event of a world crisis of broad scope, have been dissipated."

CUBA

The media continued to defend Castro's no on-site inspection policy and expressed optimism about the outcome of the Kennedy-Mikoyan talks. TV commentator Luis Gomez Wanguemert indicated that they "could give rise to a different way of looking at things both in Washington and in Moscow and would lead to some progress toward the solution of certain problems."

AFRICA

African media reactions to Cuba continue to be limited and varied. Scattered assessments of the post-Cuban situation warn that serious problems remain. Both Washington and Moscow continue to share responsibility for the crisis and credit for the relaxation of tensions.

Problems Remain for the U.S.

Limited credit for American handling of the crisis tended to be offset by reminders that serious problems remain. L'Action in Tunisia said that "certain OAS members" retain "fundamental reservations about the measures taken (by the U.S.) against Cuba and against the general threat of Communist subversion in Latin America." The paper said American support for anti-Communist elements could help overthrow established governments "as we have already seen in Argentina and Peru" and thus "seriously compromise the Alliance for Progress." L'Action concluded that "economic weakness and political instability" in Latin America "represent a much more serious danger to the Western Hemisphere than the direct menace of Cuban subversion."

La Presse in Tunisia said that Washington knew of "Khrushchev's internal difficulties," and "refused to make propaganda out of its recent success." It said Kennedy wanted to get the "maximum mileage from the situation" and would like to use it to work toward easing world tensions. "But he is by no means ready to make concessions which would not be reciprocated by the Soviet Union," La Presse stated.

Khrushchev Seen as Stronger

A feature article in the Corriere Della Somalia said that Khrushchev "maintains the initiative diplomatically and his stature as a politician has risen rather than fallen. We have a lot to learn if (as a result of the crisis) we think the Communist challenge to capitalism has diminished."

25

Soviet-Cuban Relations Difficult

L'Action in Tunisia said that Mikoyan's visit to Cuba had not greatly improved relations between the two countries because the ~~USSSR~~ "is acting as a great power with worldwide responsibilities ~~while~~ Cuba is stubbornly insisting on its own local point of view (since it) still feels, rightly or wrongly, menaced by its powerful neighbor."

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Except for continued news coverage, there has been little media comment on the Cuba crisis in the past week. Only available comment was in Indian newspapers, two of which contended that Russia did not want war, and one that the Cuba crisis was merely a "blunder" by Khrushchev.

The Assam Tribune of Shillong, citing the outcome of the Cuba crisis as sufficient proof, said it was convinced Russia does not want war. The Times of India (Calcutta) suggested that Soviet policy has always been trying to achieve a detente with the West -- a "fact" which perhaps more than any other reason is responsible for the growing distrust between Moscow and Peking. However, it predicted the Russians would drive a hard bargain in their disarmament negotiations.

The Assam Tribune related disarmament to Cuba and said "what is wanted" is that Russia, the U.K. and the U.S. come to an agreement to ban the manufacture, use and tests of nuclear weapons. The paper hoped that the USSR would consent to the U.S. proposal for inspection on the spot. Such inspection "should" be entrusted to nonaligned and neutral countries.

President Kennedy was praised by Calcutta's Statesman for inviting the UN to play a significant role in the Cuba crisis. And the Times of India praised both the U.S. and U.K. for giving immediate response to India's plight at the height of the Cuba crisis.

The Hindustan Standard noted that only in the relaxed atmosphere following the Cuba crisis was it possible to reach agreement between the U.S. and the USSR on the re-election of Mr. Thant as Secretary-General of the UN.

FAR EAST

Cuba remains on the inside pages of the Japanese press. Light comment generally was devoted to post-mortem assessments of the outcome of the crisis. The conservative Tokyo Shimbun voiced the pessimistic belief that Cuba will become a protracted international issue because of its role in the complicated U.S.-Soviet relationship. The same paper's Washington correspondent concluded that Western European nations have a new sense of confidence in U.S. leadership since the Soviet retreat in Cuba. A news reviewer on the neutralist-inclined Mainichi, however, opined that the worth of a nation should be judged by its perseverance in withholding the use of weapons, and on this basis praised Khrushchev for his withdrawal.

The anti-Communist Nation of Rangoon warned that Soviet initiative could be expected in regard to Berlin, but reflected new confidence when it assumed the West would yield nothing.

The Philippines Herald (Manila) was encouraged to believe that the "new sense of sobriety and restraint" imposed on the leaders of the world by the Cuban confrontation had measurably brightened the prospects for an East-West disarmament agreement, in particular in regard to the achievement of a limited enforceable nuclear test ban treaty. Both the Manila Times and the Manila Chronicle had words of strong praise for the permanent appointment of U Thant as Secretary General of the U.N., with the Times indicating its belief that U Thant's mediative efforts in the Cuban crisis had strengthened his chances of receiving the Nobel peace prize.

WESTERN EUROPE

Several influential newspapers in key European countries attempted to draw a balance of the Cuba crisis. Most saw gains for peace, both in heightened U.S. prestige and the reopening of communication between the superpowers on the highest level. They warned against the assumption that any short-term solutions of East-West problems could be easily found. A spirit of measured optimism rose as Mikoyan returned to the U.S. but faded away by the time of his departure. Many media asserted that Castro's position in Latin America had weakened greatly. Others speculated on the lessons of the crisis for Western solidarity, particularly in light of the forthcoming Paris NATO meeting.

Commenting on the first monthly anniversary of the crisis London's independent The Economist spoke for a number of opinion-makers when it indicted the optimistic mood of many Europeans: "There is nothing like a good scare to make a man take a rosy view of life." The weekly found grounds for hope in what it termed basic changes in the relationship between the U.S. and the USSR and felt that a test ban might be achieved; however, the basic positions of the superpowers are too wide apart to permit wishful thinking. German influential conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung warned that "the threat /of nuclear war/ has not been removed from the world," even though Kennedy and Khrushchev were able to see the crisis through.

Writing in conservative Figaro, Paris, Raymond Aron took issue with the pessimists who feel we are "back where we were." He felt that "the respect which Khrushchev must have conceived for Kennedy, especially if accompanied by renewed awareness of the unpredictability of American reactions, is an element which...is of extreme significance in the present situation." Milan's right-center Corriere della Sera, echoing this thought, asserted: "The changes are many but the most fundamental...is this: that America has become conscious of its power and Russia has become conscious of the limits of its own."

36

Many papers, especially in France and Italy, welcomed Mikoyan's return to the U.S. as an opportunity to further the Soviet-American detente. Moderate-left Paris-Jour said: "The hatchet has been buried between East and West." Other Paris papers based hopes for a broad agreement between the superpowers on the theory that difficulties with China would prompt Soviet moves in that direction. Some media speculated that the wide-ranging talks in Washington might be a prelude to a summit conference. Thus Rome's Il Messaggero, center, did not "rule out the possibility that Mikoyan will today carry out a mission similar to that... in 1959 when he prepared the Camp David meeting...."

Later, the communique on the talks, together with apparent Soviet intransigence at Geneva, dampened many spirits. Italian comment on the results was rather pessimistic while the liberal Guardian, Manchester, a strong proponent of East-West talks, stated: "Although negotiations on a test ban, on disarmament, and on Germany will continue, the U.S. has no more hope for success than before the Cuban crisis."

Leading papers in various countries cheerfully noted that Fidel Castro had lost more than Soviet jets and missiles. Turin's La Stampa, left-center, believed that the Soviets "will slowly evade their obligations to Castro," leaving him alone to contend with the OAS. French and German papers also stressed Castro's weakness although one of the latter, Berlin's pro-government Der Tag, referred to the continued possibilities of Cuban subversion, should Castro obtain an American guarantee.

The forthcoming NATO meeting sparked some comment on the lessons of Cuba for the Atlantic Alliance. A number of papers recognized that solidarity and co-ordination of action among the allies must be tightened up in view of the possibility of recurring crisis. European preoccupation with this theme -- and especially the problem of control of the nuclear deterrent -- was summed up by London's conservative Daily Telegraph: "The Atlantic partnership is an unequal and an unhappy one and is likely to remain so as long as Continental Europe lacks a genuine say in nuclear policy."

